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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 002956

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [NP](#)
SUBJECT: PARTIES PLAN POLL BOYCOTT

REF: A. KATHMANDU 2907

[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 2816

Classified By: Charge Elisabeth Millard. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) The UN Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) said on December 28 that the Maoist leadership had given assurances that they had not instructed cadre to abduct or kill as part of their anti-election plan (ref A). The Maoists gave no indication whether they would extend the cease-fire, set to expire on January 2. Also on December 28, Vice-Chairman Tulsi Giri said that the government could consider postponing municipal polls if the political parties were clear that they wanted to postpone the elections to engage in dialogue. However, on December 29, the seven-party alliance announced an election boycott campaign, including expelling for five years any Party member who supported or participated in the polls. Meanwhile, the Election Commission announced insurance of up to 10,000 USD for staff killed or injured during the election period. Local NGO Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) reported that in the first three months of the unilateral cease-fire (September 3 to December 2), the Maoists killed thirteen people and abducted 8,777 people. Security forces killed 62 suspected Maoists and arrested at least 214 others during the same period. The seven-party alliance called for peaceful nationwide rallies on January 2 to explain the election boycott plan. End Summary.

Maoists Respond to OHCHR Promising No Physical Action

[1](#)2. (U) On December 28, the OHCHR issued a press release saying it had received an assurance from the leadership of the Maoists that the announcement of their action to disrupt municipal elections "should by no means imply that our cadres have been instructed to abduct or kill those participating in the elections." This assurance followed the Maoist's December 22 statement (ref A) to take "physical action" against election campaigners. The OHCHR Representative Ian Martin had subsequently written to the Maoist leadership, saying that threats to the life or physical integrity of individuals taking no active part in the hostilities, or the taking of hostages, would be "a grave violation of the principles of international humanitarian law and of

international human rights standards." After receiving the Maoist assurance, OHCHR noted that it would continue to "give the highest priority" to monitoring the respect of international human rights principles by both Maoists and state actors. The Maoists gave no indication whether they would extend the cease-fire, set to expire at midnight on January 2. Newspapers, such as the December 27 Drishti National Weekly, reported that Maoists had new commanders in place in the Kathmandu Valley to enter their "second-phase plan" to attack in urban centers.

Government Could Consider Postponing Polls

13. (U) On December 28, Vice-Chairman Giri said that if the political parties adopted a positive attitude, the government could consider postponing municipal polls. Speaking at a mass meeting in Jhapa District, Giri said the Parties would have to be clear that they wanted to postpone the elections to engage in dialogue. He added, "however, the government can sentence the political leaders to jail if they try to disrupt the municipal polls." He continued, "We can term them fanatics and send them to jail if they start talking too much." Giri's remarks were seen as responding to those of Nepal Congress (NC) party leader GP Koirala, who last week said there was a possibility of talks with the King if polls were postponed. Giri noted that the political leader's statements were inconsistent, saying "NC president Koirala sometimes demands reinstatement of parliament, at other times says the situation must remain as that prior to October 4, 2002 and now he demands postponement of the polls to hold dialogue with the King - What are we to make of all this?"

Parties Announce Boycott Plan

14. (U) On December 29, the seven-party alliance issued a joint appeal to the Nepali people to actively boycott the municipal polls, terming them a "ploy" to push the country into civil war and legitimize the King's autocratic rule. The joint appeal noted that that Parties would expel for five years any member who supported or participated in the polls. It said there was no conducive environment for free and fair elections, and that the election was to be staged inside a security cordon as a "drama" to confuse the international community. It said the election would push the country toward further violence and anarchy. The parties decided to print ten million copies of the joint appeal and go door to door to distribute it to every adult in the Kathmandu Valley.

Election Commission Promises Security for Staff

15. (U) On December 28, the Election Commission promised "adequate security" to election staffers, and announced insurance for government staffers mobilized during the period of municipal polls in case of injuries or deaths. Government insurance would provide civil service officers, (those with a BA-level education and above) up to 700,000 NRS (9,590 USD) and civil service clerks, (those with education below BA level) with up to 500,000 NRS (6,850 USD). On December 28, the Election Commission opened election offices in the forty-three districts with municipalities. In Nepal's second largest city, Biratnagar, the Election Commission mobilized over 500 staffers to work in 67 polling stations open to 95,686 eligible voters. Nationwide, 4,146 municipal seats were open for election in 1,394 polling stations.

INSEC Reports 75 Killed During Cease-fire

16. (U) Local NGO Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) reported that in the first three months of the unilateral cease-fire (September 3 to December 2) seventy-five people were killed: Maoists killed thirteen people (four army soldiers and nine civilians) and state security forces killed 62 people (Maoists and likely a few civilians). The report noted that Maoists did not respect their own commitment;

continuing killing, abduction, targeting of schools, beating, extortion and looting. Maoists abducted 8,777 persons, mostly students and teachers, and targeted schools affecting more than 30,000 students during the three month period. The report noted that the state arrested at least 214 people from 35 districts, and rearrested 36 people from 11 districts, on allegations of being Maoist during the same period.

Demonstrations Continue

¶7. (C) Demonstrations throughout the country continued. A seven-party rally explaining the election boycott is scheduled for January 2 in all major towns in Nepal, including Kathmandu. UML Central Committee Member Kashi Nath Adhikari told Emboff that the January 2 meeting would be peaceful and, in addition to the election plan, would call on the King to end his autocratic rule, call for action surrounding the December 14 Nagarkot incident (ref B), and, depending on the situation, call for the Maoists to extend their cease-fire.

Comment

¶8. (C) The Maoist assurances to OHCHR do not promise peace, and any Maoist claim of non-violence is suspect given that Maoists killed 13 people and abducted thousands during the first three months of their unilateral cease-fire.

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